

NEWSLETTER
KAS
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Maria-Theresia Raaz

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The following articles are a composition of last two weeks' (01.06.2013-15.06.2013) press releases in Cambodia. They give a review on current developments in the country.

Denial Law Adopted by The National Assembly

The National Assembly has passed the so called "Law on the Denial of Crimes Committed During the Period of Democratic Kampuchea", which criminalises the denial and glorification of Khmer Rouge crimes. A violation will be prosecuted with jail terms of up to two years and severe fines. Preceding the vote in the National Assembly experts were criticising that such a denial law would violate the right of freedom of expression according to Article 41 of the Cambodian constitution. Furthermore, critics expressed their concerns that the passing of the law is merely a politically motivated action of the ruling party, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), in the run-up to the elections in July.



source: Voice of America Khmer¹

As the vice president of the oppositional party, Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), Kem Sokha, has been recently accused of denying the cruelty of the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge at prison S-21, known as a former torture centre in the city of Phnom Penh, in a speech, the initiative by Prime Minister Hun Sen for the passing of such a law is perceived with mixed feelings. Human rights experts warned that this law could be

possibly abused to silence any opposition to the government.

Further reading:

Assembly Approves Law Against Denial of Khmer Rouge Crimes

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/assembly-approves-law-against-denial-of-khmer-rouge-crimes/1677464.html>

Khmer Rouge Denial Law Criticized as Political

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/khmer-rouge-denial-law-criticized-as-political/1676668.htm>

Without Debate, Assembly Passes Heavily Criticised Denial Law

<http://phnompenhpost.com/2013060766154/National/without-debate-assembly-passes-heavily-criticised-denial-law.html>

¹<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/assembly-approves-law-against-denial-of-khmer-rouge-crimes/1677464.html>

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Oppositional Party Members Banned From The National Assembly



source: Voice of America Khmer²

the election law. The barred MPs wanted to run for election as representatives for the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), a party which was set up out of the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party last year. Furthermore, it was stated that the representatives have not been elected as CNRP members but as members of the Sam Rainsy Party or Human Rights Party. The decision has been heavily criticised on both the national and international level. The US State Department expressed deep concern and recognises this action as a threat to the democratic process in Cambodia.

The legality of this decision is questioned, too. Article 76 of the Cambodian Constitution requires the National Assembly to consist of at least 120 members. A number less than this would initiate the dissolving of the parliament. As well the fact that only the people can install representatives into power and are the only ones to end their mandates causes serious concerns about the state of democracy in the kingdom. With regard to the recently passed controversial denial law, the opposition accuses the government that the ban of the lawmakers is closely related to it. Without representatives of the opposition within the National Assembly it was easy to vote in favour of the law. The opposition asked its members to sign a petition for the 27 parliamentarians to regain their seats.

Further reading:

Petition Circulating to Have Lawmakers Returned to Assembly

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/petition-circulating-to-have-lawmakers-returned-to-assembly/1684452.html>

US Rebukes Government's Expulsion of Opposition

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/elections/us-rebukes-governments-expulsion-of-opposition-30036/>

US Envoy Speaks Up On Ouster

<http://phnompenhpost.com/2013061866332/National/us-envoy-speaks-up-on-ouster.html>

²<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/petition-circulating-to-have-lawmakers-returned-to-assembly/1684452.html>

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Exports of Milled Rice Increased



source: Bangkok Post³

only competitor in the region for fragrant rice, becomes less and less important due to the increasing prices. Therefore, the president of the Khmer Food Co Ltd encourages farmers to increase the share of aromatic rice on their plantations and seek for two harvests a year. New markets with high potential in the region are supposed to be China, Indonesia and Malaysia as there is a growing demand for fragrant rice.

Compared to the first five months of last year's export of Cambodian milled rice the data of the Council of Development of Cambodia report an increase of 127 percent. Thereby, the European countries remain the traditional market for this product. Additionally, the Everything-But-Arms-Initiative, which promotes the duty-free export for developing countries to Europe, starts to have a visible effect on the numbers. The most rice is imported by France, followed by Poland. Thailand, as the

Further reading:

Milled Rice Exports Up 127 Per Cent

<http://phnompenhpost.com/2013061066159/Business/milled-rice-exports-up-127-percent.html>

Milled Rice Exports Rise in First Four Months

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/business/milled-rice-exports-rise-in-first-four-months-22826/>

³<http://www.bangkokpost.com/business/news/354568/cheaper-rice-gives-cambodia-edge-over-thailand>

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37th UNESCO World Heritage Committee Meeting in Phnom Penh

This year's meeting of the World Heritage Committee is held in the capital of Cambodia. The summit brings about 1,500 delegates and government officials from more than 120 countries together. The committee, chaired by Cambodia, will select 15 more sites to add to the list of World Heritage Sites, which currently includes 962 places. Officials stated that Cambodia has not nominated any sites in the country itself as a proof for neutrality as this year's chair. On this occasion, Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed once again his special thanks to the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, which returned two 10th century statues to the country last week. He also stressed that Cambodia is aware of its responsibility to preserve its cultural heritage sites especially in the terms of the growing number of tourists coming to the country.



source: UNESCO World Heritage Committee⁴

Further reading:

Endangered Sites Discussed During Heritage Meeting

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/endangered-sites-discussed-during-heritage-meet-31215/>

UNESCO World Heritage Confab Under Way In Phnom Penh

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/unesco-world-heritage-confab-under-way-in-phnom-penh/1683382.html>

Coal-fired Plant to Reduce Number of Blackouts

To cope with the problem of ongoing power cuts in Cambodia the state-owned Electricite du Cambodge (EDC) declared that a coal-fired plant in Preah Sihanouk province will begin to supply the city of Phnom Penh and the provinces of Kandal and Kompong Speu with electricity this week. Especially hotels, banks and residential areas suffered from the blackouts in the last months. The use of a generator to ensure the provision with hot water and electricity is widespread but emerges as well as a problem with regard to the high electricity bills and a noisy environment. Business owners therefore hope that the announcement is more than only a promise.



source: The Phnom Penh Post⁵

⁴<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1029>

⁵<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/2013052765845/Business/blackouts-to-end-soon-edc.html>

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Further reading:

New Coal Plant To Tackle Blackouts

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/new-coal-plant-to-tackle-blackouts-31220/>

EDC Promises More Power, Sceptics Wait

<http://phnompenhpost.com/2013061866318/Business/edc-promises-more-power-sceptics-wait.html>